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Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 EUR-12 PA-01 BIB-01 NSC-05 SS-15
/068 W
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R 181658Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6616
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

S E C R E T PANAMA 2645

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PN
SUBJECT: PANAMANIAN ATTENDANCE AT CONGRESS OF WORLD FEDERATION
OF TRADE UNIONS

REF: DEPT A-1200

SUMMARY: THREE PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVES AT SUBJECT CON-
FERENCE INCLUDE ONE FROM FREE-LABOR CTRP. SECRETARY GENERAL
OF LATTER ORGANIZATION TRIED TO AVOID THIS, BUT WAS OUTVOTED
BY A DISSIDENT GROUP IN CONFEDERATION EXECUTIVE BOARD. END
SUMMARY

1. A 3-MAN PANAMANIAN DELEGATION LEFT HERE ON APRIL 8 FOR
HAVANA, WHENCE THEY INTENDED TO PROCEED TO PRAGUE TO ATTEND
SUBJECT CONFERENCE. THEY INCLUDED ANGEL GOMEZ, SECRETARY
GENERAL OF COMMUNIST-DOMINATED NATIONAL CENTRAL OF PANAMANIAN
WORKERS (CNTP, THE LOCAL WFTU AFFILIATE); RAFAEL CACERES,
AN OFFICIAL OF CNTP; AND ELOY MERCADO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF
NATIONAL UNION OF BANK WORKERS AND AN OFFICIAL OF DEMOCRATIC
CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA (CTRP).

2. SECRETARY GENERAL DEAN BUTCHER OF CTRP TOLD LABOFF
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IN CONFIDENCE THAT CTRP RECEIVED A DIRECT INVITATION
FROM WFTU. AFTER RECEIVING A MESSAGE FROM ICFTU DENYING
RUMOR THAT LATTER ORGANIZATION WOULD ATTEND, AND MESSAGES
FROM ICFTU AND ORIT COUNSELING AFFILIATES NOT TO PAR-
TICIPATE, BUTCHER HAD INTENDED TO SIT ON WFTU INVITATION.
HOWEVER, GOMEZ ENCOURAGED MERCADO AND OTHERS TO BRING
MATTER TO FULL CTRP EXECUTIVE BOARD, WHERE BUTCHER WAS

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OUTVOTED AND MERCADO DESIGNATED TO ATTEND.

3. BUTCHER ALSO SAID WFTU SEPARATELY INVITED CONATO, THE UMBRELLA NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOR, TO ITS CONGRESS. GOMEZ TRIED TO HAVE SECRETARY GENERAL CEFERINO RODRIGUEZ, WHO REPRESENTS INDEPENDENT UNION SECTOR ON CONATO, DESIGNATED TO REPRESENT CONATO, BUT BUTCHER AND SECRETARY GENERAL JULIO CESAR PINZON OF WCL-AFFILIATED CIT SUCCEEDED IN BLOCKING GOMEZ' MOVE.

4. BUTCHER KNEW OF NOTHING SPECIAL THAT GOMEZ HAD PLANNED FOR CONGRESS, BEYOND A STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION TO LABOR ORGANIZATIONS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA, POLAND, USSR, ET AL, FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE TO CNTP IN EFFORTS TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP.

5. BUTCHER SAID WRYLY THAT HE RATHER EXPECTED CTRP TO GET RAP OVER KNUCKLES FROM ORIT AND ICFTU BECAUSE OF MERCADO'S GOING TO WFTU CONGRESS.

6. COMMENT: BUTCHER'S DEFEAT WAS AT HANDS OF A GAGGLE OF DISSIDENTS IN CTRP EXECUTIVE BOARD INCLUDING MERCADO, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OSCAR DAVIDSON, AND PABLO AROSEMENA, AN ASPIRANT TO REPLACE BUTCHER. ALL HAVE FLIRTED WITH CNTP, AND OTHER COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CIRCUMVENT BUTCHER

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IN PAST. THEIR MOST RECENT FORAY HAS BEEN COOPERATION WITH A NUMBER OF LABOR LEADERS CLOSE TO DISSIDENT MARXIST GROUP, THE "FRACCION" (AND REPORTEDLY CLOSE TO CERTAIN LEFTISTS IN GOP AS WELL) IN TRYING TO ORGANIZE A WORKERS' POLITICAL PARTY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE BUTCHER'S LOSS OF CONTROL OVER HIS EXECUTIVE BOARD IS SERIOUS, BUT THIS EPISODE IS ANOTHER REMINDER THAT HIS GRIP ON THAT USUALLY-FRACTIOUS BODY IS FAR FROM ABSOLUTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNIONS, MEETINGS, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, MEETING DELEGATIONS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PANAMA02645
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780168-0645
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780445/aaaablww.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION SIL
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE A-1200
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2933296
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAMANIAN ATTENDANCE AT CONGRESS OF WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
TAGS: ELAB, PN, WFTU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e38d07ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Declassified/Released
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20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014